ATLAS

ADV. INTO TERROR

ADVENTURES INTO TERROR

OCT.

NO. 24

10¢

TAKE THESE HAIR-RAISING ADVENTURES INTO TERROR

"THE BODY SNATCHERS!"

"THE LAST MAN!"

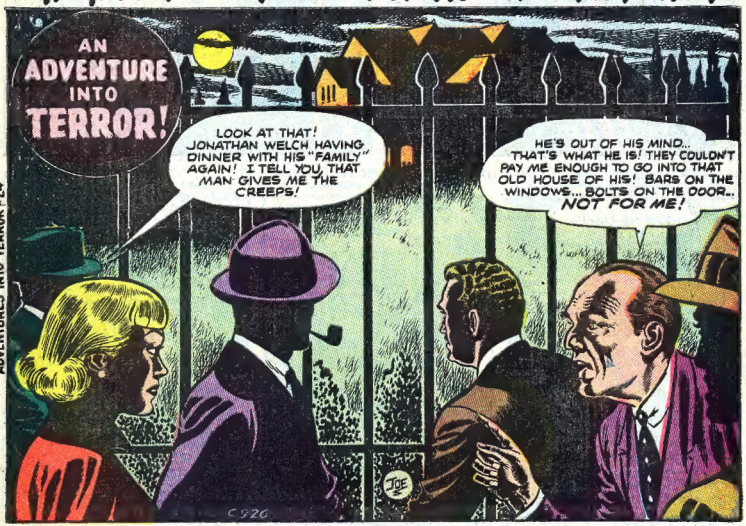
"THE WAX MEN!"

KEEP THOSE TORCHES GOING, MEN...IF THEY'RE AROUND HERE, WE'LL SMOKE 'EM OUT!

ON SALE MONTHLY

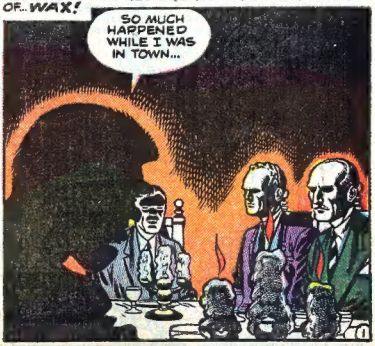
YOU MAY HAVE BEEN IN A WAX MUSEUM AND SHUDDERED AT THE MACABRE FIGURES ON DISPLAY THERE! BUT YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET, UNTIL YOU STOP IN FOR A VISIT WITH *THIS* GRUESOME GROUP...SO BE OUR GUEST AND LET'S DROP IN ON JONATHAN!

THE WAX MEN


AN ADVENTURE INTO TERROR!
LOOK AT THAT! JONATHAN WELCH HAVING DINNER WITH HIS "FAMILY" AGAIN! I TELL YOU, THAT MAN GIVES ME THE CREEPS!
HE'S OUT OF HIS MIND... THAT'S WHAT HE IS! THEY COULDN'T PAY ME ENOUGH TO GO INTO THAT OLD HOUSE OF HIS! BARS ON THE WINDOWS... BOLTS ON THE DOOR... NOT FOR ME!
JOE S
C926

WHY, YOU MIGHT WONDER, DO THE TOWNSPEOPLE FEAR JONATHAN WELCH? AFTER ALL...HE WAS MERELY A HANDSOME, YOUNG MAN HAVING DINNER WITH HIS FAMILY...

PERHAPS IT WAS BECAUSE HIS "FAMILY" WAS MADE OF...*WAX!*



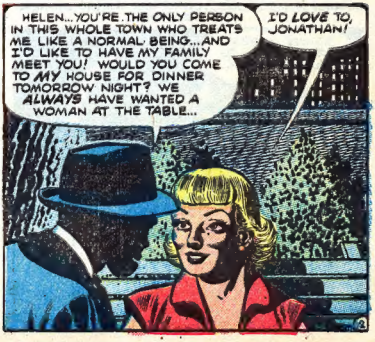
YES...THE WAX MEN AT JONATHAN'S DINNER TABLE FRIGHTENED EVERYONE! EVERYONE, THAT IS, EXCEPT HELEN JONES! SHE SAW MORE THAN WAX IN THAT HOUSE...

IT WAS A FEW DAYS LATER, IN TOWN, THAT HELEN HAD HER OPPORTUNITY...

IT WAS THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE WORLD... BUT IT WORKED!

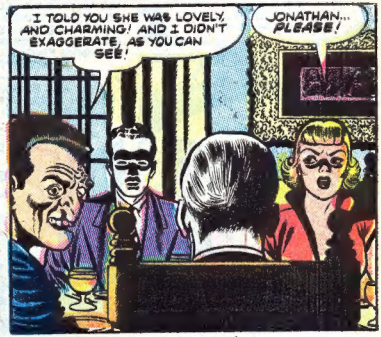
JONATHAN WAS "DUCK SOUP" FOR SOMEONE LIKE HELEN, AND IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, THEY WERE TOGETHER CONSTANTLY...

THEN, ONE NIGHT, JONATHAN TOOK HELEN'S WARM HAND IN HIS COLD ONE...


HELEN...YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON IN THIS WHOLE TOWN WHO TREATS ME LIKE A NORMAL BEING...AND I'D LIKE TO HAVE MY FAMILY MEET YOU! WOULD YOU COME TO MY HOUSE FOR DINNER TOMORROW NIGHT? WE ALWAYS HAVE WANTED A WOMAN AT THE TABLE...
I'D LOVE TO, JONATHAN!

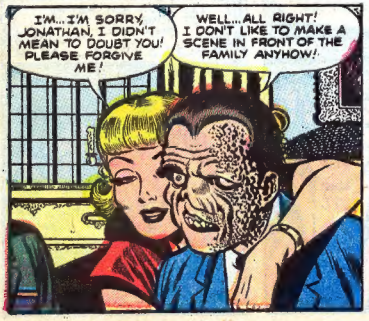
NERVES ARE NOT ALWAYS CONTROLLABLE, AND HELEN HAD SOME DIFFICULTY WITH HERS WHEN SHE WAS ESCORTED TO THE DINNER TABLE IN JONATHAN'S HOUSE THE NEXT NIGHT...

ONCE THEY WERE ALL SEATED, THE WEIRDEST TABLE CONVERSATION HELEN EVER IMAGINED BEGAN...



AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THEY DON'T? WHY AREN'T THEY ALIVE?
BECAUSE THEY'RE MADE OF WAX! WAX...AND NOTHING ELSE! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE... FANTASTIC!

IF EVER THE LIGHT OF MADNESS SHONE, IT WAS IN JONATHAN'S EYES AT THAT MOMENT! HELEN WAS AFRAID SHE MIGHT SPOIL ALL HER PLANS, AND SHE RAN AROUND TO HIM...


I'M... I'M SORRY, JONATHAN, I DIDN'T MEAN TO DOUBT YOU! PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
WELL... ALL RIGHT! I DON'T LIKE TO MAKE A SCENE IN FRONT OF THE FAMILY ANYHOW!

AND IT WASN'T MANY WEEKS LATER THAT...

...AND I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE...

IT WAS DONE! WHAT SHE'D BEEN WORKING FOR WAS COMPLETED! ALL THAT REMAINED WAS FOR HER TO GET HER HANDS ON HIS MONEY.. MEANWHILE TRYING HER BEST TO ENDURE HIS PRESENCE..SOMETHING SHE WAS FINDING MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT TO DO...

THIS WILL BE YOUR ROOM, HELEN! IF YOU DON'T MIND, I STILL PREFER TO KEEP SEPARATE ROOMS!

NO... I DON'T MIND AT ALL!

IN FACT, I PREFER IT! HE'S *SO REPULSIVE!*

THE SEPARATE ROOMS HELPED..BUT THE WAX MEN REMAINED! ALWAYS THEY WERE THERE...AT THE TABLE.. AND HER NERVES JANGLED MORE EACH DAY...

I'LL BE GONE ALL DAY, MY DEAR...BUT YOU'LL BE HERE TO KEEP MY FAMILY COMPANY!

YES... SURE...

BUT EACH DAY WAS WORSE THAN THE ONE BEFORE...

I HATE YOU...YOU *WAX* MONSTERS!

I...I BROKE OFF A FINGER! BETTER THROW IT IN THE FIRE WHERE JONATHAN WON'T NOTICE IT!

BUT THAT NIGHT, WHEN JONATHAN RETURNED, HE *DID* NOTICE...

JONATHAN! WHAT'S WRONG?

WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE FINGER? WHY DID YOU HURT ONE OF MY FAMILY?

YOUR FAMILY! *YOUR FAMILY!* I'M SICK OF HEARING ABOUT THEM! THEY'RE NOTHING BUT *WAX*...AND I'LL SHOW YOU!

HALF MAD WITH RAGE, HELEN RUSHED PAST HER HUSBAND AND RUSHED INTO THE DINING ROOM...

I'LL SHOW HIM THEY'RE NOT ALIVE...THAT THEY'RE ONLY WAX!

BUT A FIRE, LIKE A MIND, CAN GET OUT OF CONTRO...

THE HEAT WAS INTENSE, AND HER FEAR SCREAMED FROM HER THROAT...

AFTER ALL...IT'S ONLY LOGICAL! IF A MAN'S FAMILY IS MADE OF WAX...WHY SHOULD HE BE ANY DIFFERENT?

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN SUSPENSE STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

ENOUGH ROPE!

JEALOUSY is a common emotion in most people, and sometimes it can do strange things. It can twist a man's mind until he is ready to render his foe a great deal of harm . . . sometimes even resort to murder! Augustus Merlin was a man capable of any manner of crime, and generally his vicious behavior was due to this very element of jealousy which dominated his personality. Merlin was a magician, and his fits of jealousy were directed against his successful rivals who were more famous than he . . . many had become world prominent and some had even performed before royalty.

Each year the magicians of the world would hold a convention, at which the members of the profession would display their latest feats of magic and defy anyone present to expose the tricky means by which the magic was performed. Merlin too would show off his bag of tricks, but they always ridiculed him and laughed at these illusions "which even an inexpert amateur could perform", they said. This constant ridicule and laughter incensed Merlin. He sat in his study for hours, trying to conjure up magic tricks that had never been done before. Suddenly, he thought of the magic lore of India . . . the fakirs who walked on hot coals —lay on a bed of sharp spikes— the fantastic Indian rope trick. These feats had never been performed successfully by anyone in the western world. Merlin decided he would journey to mystic India and learn the secrets of the fakirs, by force if necessary!

When Merlin arrived in India, he made his way into some of the smaller towns of the interior, for this was where one was most likely to find the Indians performing the feats for which they had become world renowned. And sure enough, in the market place of a certain town he did see one old man lying on a bed of spikes. To the natives passing by, this sight did not create much interest. They had seen it done many times before. But still the old man was determined to foster interest in his performance and gather some money. So he rose from his strange bed and ordered an assistant to prepare the box filled with hot coals. This was a shallow container . . . the coals gave out an unmistakable heat. Now more of the natives stopped to watch the old man. Merlin stood by too, his eyes glued on the old fakir's movements.

Without hesitation the Indian stepped through the glowing coals without uttering a cry of pain. When he had passed through the box, he sat on the ground and raised the bottom of his bare feet so that all who were curious could take a look. Merlin stared at those exposed feet. There was not a burn on them! *This* was a trick that he *must* learn, so that he could perform before his rivals at the next magicians' convention, and startle all of them!

Merlin tossed a few small coins at the old man, and some of the natives followed his example. As his young assistant gathered up the coins the old man smiled. He spoke in a dialect which Merlin could not understand. But it was obvious that he had said something quite startling and interesting, for now many more natives within earshot began to gather around the fakir to watch his next feat. The old man removed a thick rope from a basket. As he held it loosely in his hand, he muttered some strange words, and suddenly the rope leaped from his hand and stood upright! The old man's hands were not even touching the rope, and yet it stood straight and stiff from the ground. Then the fakir gave a brief command to his young assistant. The latter began to climb up the rope, hand over hand. Merlin stood there and watched in stupefaction. But his amazement knew no bounds the next few seconds, for when the youth had nearly reached the top of the rope, he just simply vanished into thin air! This was, indeed, the most fantastic trick Merlin had ever witnessed! And he knew he *must* learn its secret.

Merlin again tossed some coins at the old man and walked away. He did not care to watch the reappearance of the youth at the top of the rope when the fakir pronounced certain mumbo-jumbo. He had seen enough! He would pay any amount of money to learn the fakir's secret and return with it to America to startle his rivals. Would any of them dare to laugh at him after he had performed this greatest magic feat of all? He would show them! His jealous streak asserted himself and he was impatient for the night to come, when he would make his move to get this strange secret into his possession.

Merlin did not wander too far from the market place area. He kept the old man and his young assistant always in sight. When night had fallen on the town, Merlin saw the two men separate, the old man to retire to his dirty hut—the youth to drink a glass of wine at a cafe.

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT STORY...

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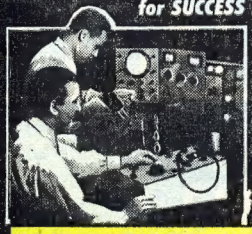

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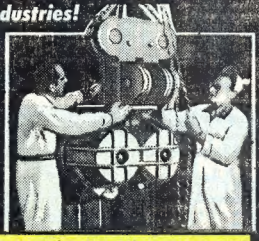

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WHICH GOES TO PROVE...PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH ***WAX*** PEOPLE SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH FIRE! NOW TAKE A LOOK AT THIS GRAVEYARD SCENE...AS YOU CAN SEE, THE GHOULS ARE AT WORK! TROUBLE'S BREWING FOR A CERTAIN DOCTOR...READ ON AND YOU'LL ***DIG*** WHAT WE MEAN!

THE BODY SNATCHERS

THE YEAR IS 1821, THE PLACE IS BRAMBURG, GERMANY! YOU ARE HERR DOKTOR KNOPF, CHANCELLOR OF THE BRAMBURG MEDICAL COLLEGE...

NOTE THE DISEASED LIVER, IT'S DISTINCTIVE COLORATION ...OBSERVE, PLEASE, THE NEIGHBORING VEINS... NOW WATCH CAREFULLY AS I START THE EXPERIMENT...

YOUR SKILLFUL HANDS WORK QUICKLY...SNIPPING TISSUE, SLICING VEINS, INJECTING COLORING FLUID! THE STUDENTS WATCH IN HUSHED SILENCE, LISTENING INTENTLY TO YOUR TERSE COMMENTS...

OBSERVE, PLEASE, HOW FRESH THE CORPSE IS...THEREFORE THIS EXPERIMENT IS POSSIBLE! ONLY IN THE BRAMBURG MEDICAL COLLEGE ARE THE CORPSES SO FRESH...

OH, YES, HERR DOKTOR KNOPF, YOU ARE VERY PROUD OF YOUR COLLEGE! YOUR ENTIRE LIFE IS DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE! AND YOUR COLLEAGUES HAVE BEGUN TO APPRECIATE YOUR DEVOTION...

THIS IS WONDERFUL, KNOPF! THESE FINDINGS OF DISEASES OF INTERNAL ORGANS WILL REVOLUTIONIZE THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE!

THANK YOU! IT PLEASES ME THAT AT LAST YOU HAVE OVERCOME YOUR SQUEAMISHNESS ABOUT MY EXPERIMENTS!

YOU ARE A PIONEER, HERR DOKTOR KNOPF... A MAN WHO WILL LET NOTHING STAND IN THE WAY OF HIS SCIENCE! A MAN WHO WORKS IN THE LABORATORY ALL DAY... AND WHEN NIGHT COMES, YOU WALK A SHADOWY PATH...

BRRR... IT'S COLD OUT! AH... THERE'S THE CEMETERY JUST AHEAD!

TO MEET THE *GHOUL* WHO SUPPLIES YOU WITH FRESH CORPSES FOR YOUR VITAL EXPERIMENTS!

I NEED TWO MORE FOR TOMORROW, HUGO! WERE THERE ANY BURIALS TODAY? *THEY MUST BE FRESH!*

JA, HERR DOKTOR... THEY ARE READY EVEN NOW! *LOOK!*

GOOD! NOW I CAN START A NEW SERIES OF EXPERIMENTS! YOU ARE WORKING FOR SCIENCE, HUGO!

IT IS NOT SCIENCE I AM INTERESTED IN, HERR DOKTOR!

OF COURSE, I FORGOT... HERE IS YOUR MONEY! DELIVER THEM TO THE MEDICAL COLLEGE AT ONCE! I HAVE LEFT THE SIDE DOOR OPEN!

DANKE, HERR DOKTOR! YOU ARE VERY GENEROUS!

YOU WALK HOME BRISKLY, YOUR MIND TEEMING WITH PLANS FOR THE NEW EXPERIMENTS! BUT WHEN YOU ENTER YOUR STUDY...

FRITZ! WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE AT THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT?

WE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS FOR MANY YEARS, HANS! AT FIRST I DID NOT BELIEVE THE TALES I HEARD ABOUT YOU...

WHAT TALES?

THAT YOU DEAL WITH GHOULS TO SUPPLY YOUR MEDICAL COLLEGE WITH FRESH CORPSES FOR YOUR EXPERIMENTS! HANS... HOW CAN YOU DO THIS? THESE CORPSES WERE YOUR OWN TOWNSFOLK... PEOPLE WHO LOVED AND RESPECTED YOU!

SENTIMENTALITY HAS BEEN SQUEEZED OUT OF ME, FRITZ, BY THE DEMANDS OF SCIENCE! I USE THESE CORPSES FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH.. FOR EXPERIMENTS THAT WILL LENGTHEN THE LIFE SPAN OF ALL OF US!

I WAS HOPING YOU WOULD DENY MY ACCUSATION! BUT NOW THAT I KNOW FOR SURE... I HAVE NO CHOICE.. I MUST REPORT YOU TO THE POLICE!

IF HE REPORTS YOU, HERR DOKTOR KNOPF, IT WILL MEAN THE END OF YOUR GLORIOUS EXPERIMENTS!

YOUR CHEST HEAVES WITH RAGE! YOUR HAND REACHES SWIFTLY FOR THE SHARP LETTER OPENER ON YOUR DESK!

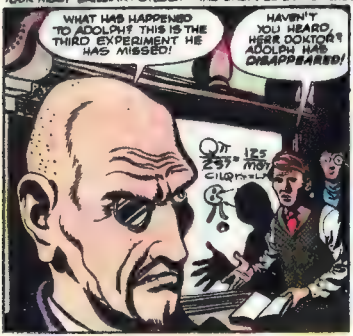
TOO BAD, FRITZ... IF YOU'D ONLY HAVE MINDED YOUR OWN BUSINESS, YOU'D HAVE LIVED TO HEAR OF MY WONDERFUL DISCOVERIES IN MEDICAL SCIENCE!

AAAARGH!

AFTERWARDS, YOU RUSH TO THE COLLEGE WHERE YOU FIND HUGO! FOR A FEW EXTRA GOLD PIECES, HUGO AGREES TO DISPOSE OF FRITZ'S BODY...
BURY HIM DEEP, HUGO! HIS CORPSE MUST NEVER BE FOUND!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, HERR DOKTOR KNOPF!

AND THE NEXT MORNING, YOU WALK THRU THE STREETS WITH YOUR HEAD HELD HIGH AND YOUR HEART SWELLING WITH PRIDE..
I AM A TRUE MAN OF SCIENCE! I STOP AT NOTHING IN ORDER TO CARRY ON MY EXPERIMENTS... NOT EVEN MURDER!

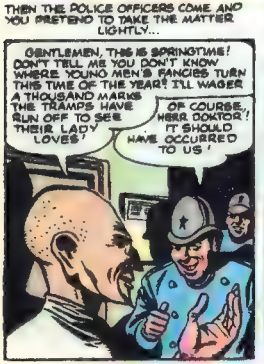
BUT A WEEK LATER, YOU ARE DISTURBED TO NOTICE THAT YOUR MOST BRILLIANT STUDENT HAS DROPPED OUT OF CLASS...


WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ADOLPH? THIS IS THE THIRD EXPERIMENT HE HAS MISSED!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD, HERR DOKTOR? ADOLPH HAS DISAPPEARED!

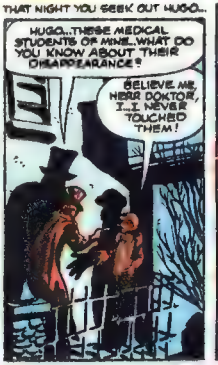
AND A WEEK AFTER THAT, ANOTHER STUDENT HAS GONE.

WE HAVE SEARCHED MAX'S LODGINGS, HERR DOKTOR! EVERYTHING IS UNDISTURBED! NO LUGGAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED...
I WONDER IF HUGO COULD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS?

THEN THE POLICE OFFICERS COME AND YOU PRETEND TO TAKE THE MATTER LIGHTLY...


GENTLEMEN, THIS IS SPRINGTIME! DON'T TELL ME YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUNG MEN'S FANCIES TURN THIS TIME OF THE YEAR! I'LL WAGER A THOUSAND MARKS THE TRAMPS HAVE RUN OFF TO SEE THEIR LADY LOVES!
OF COURSE, HERR DOKTOR! IT SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED TO US!

THAT NIGHT YOU SEEK OUT HUGO...


HUGO...THESE MEDICAL STUDENTS OF MINE...WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THEIR DISAPPEARANCE?
BELIEVE ME, HERR DOKTOR, I...I NEVER TOUCHED THEM!

WHO WAS IT THEN? I CAN TELL BY YOUR STAMMER THAT YOU KNOW MORE THAN YOU'VE TOLD!
G...PLEASE...HERR DOKTOR...Y...YOU'RE CHOKING ME! I'LL TELL YOU!

"THERE'S SOMEBODY NEW WORKING IN THIS TOWN! HE HIDES IN THE SHADOW OF THE NIGHT...I NEVER SAW HIS FACE...BUT ONE NIGHT I SAW HIM DRAGGING THE STUDENT, ADOLPH, AWAY..."

YOU THRUST HUGO FROM YOU...AND THAT NIGHT, YOU PATROL THE TOWN YOURSELF...

I CANNOT CALL THE POLICE OFFICERS IN...THEY WOULD ASK ME FOR MY SOURCE OF INFORMATION...AND THEN THEY WOULD FIND OUT ABOUT MY DEALINGS WITH HUGO!

THE BELLS IN THE CLOCK TOWER KEEP CHIMING 'THE DARKEST HOUR!' YOU SHOULD RETURN TO YOUR HOME TO GET SOME SLEEP, BUT A STRANGE FEELING KEEPS YOU PACING THE STREETS...LEADS YOU IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CEMETERY...

AND THEN, SUDDENLY, YOU SEE THE SHADOWY FIGURE!

ANGER SURGES INSIDE OF YOU AS HE STEPS OUT OF THE SHADOW! HOW DARE HE SNATCH YOUR BEST MEDICAL STUDENTS AWAY?

HOW DARE HE INTERFERE WITH YOUR GLORIOUS EXPERIMENTS?

BUT HE STANDS IN A SHAFT OF MOONLIGHT NOW, CLEARLY VISIBLE AND YOUR ANGER FLICKERS OUT, EXTINGUISHED BY A COLD BLAST OF FEAR!

AND A MOMENT LATER, YOU BLACK OUT WITH YOUR OWN HORRIFIED SCREAMS RINGING IN YOUR EARS!

WHEN YOU COME TO, YOU'RE STRAPPED TO A TABLE. THE STENCH OF ROTTING FLESH THICK IN YOUR NOSTRILS...

AND THE SHARP SCALPELS GLEAMING IN THEIR PUTRESCENT HANDS, THE CORPSES KEEP COMING TOWARD YOU!

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CONTINUED

Merlin moved up to the young man's side at the bar and offered to pay him a large sum of money if he would divulge the fakir's secret words for accomplishing the difficult rope trick. But the youth refused to betray his master. He walked away from Merlin and left the cafe. Merlin followed the magician's assistant down a dark, deserted street and forced him to stop. Merlin grabbed the youth by the throat and threatened to use violence unless the boy revealed what he knew about the rope trick. But the young man could not be persuaded. Merlin was enraged! His fingers pressed tighter and tighter around the assistant's throat. When Merlin finally released his grip, the youth fell to the ground, dead! Merlin raced away into the darkness of the night and finally reached the sanctuary of his hotel room.

Merlin did not sleep well that night. Not that the death of the young man bothered him. He was just wondering how best to convince the old fakir himself to talk. Well, the next day he would make his next move! When dawn broke over the town, Merlin left his room and went directly to the old fakir's hut. At first Merlin offered the old man a large sum of money for the secret of the rope trick. But the fakir refused to tell him. Merlin was incensed. He grabbed a carving knife from the table and grabbed the old man by the throat.

"You will tell me now!" he screamed. "Otherwise, I will cut your throat from ear to ear!"

The old man trembled in fear. He read the madness in Merlin's eyes and decided he would reveal the secret of the rope trick. The old man told Merlin what were the magic, mumbo-jumbo phrases, plus certain gestures he must make during the performance of the magic act. At last Merlin had the secret he had come to India for. Suddenly a thought occurred to him. When the old man learned of his young assistant's murder, would he not suspect Merlin of the deed and inform the police? Better to rid himself of this problem at once. The old man was about to explain the final phases of the trick when his speech was cut short by the knife thrust into his heart! Merlin grabbed the rope from the basket resting near the old man. It was the same rope the fakir had used the day before.

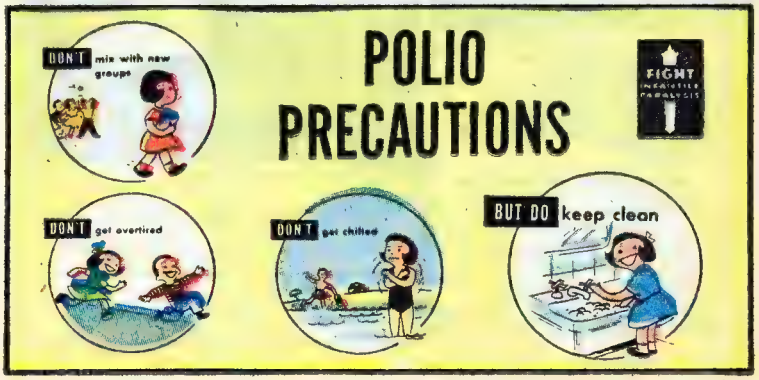
Months later, Merlin was back in the States. It was now time for the annual magicians' convention. It came around to Merlin's turn to display his magic skill. They jeered him when he claimed knowledge of performing the famed Indian rope trick. Very well, he would show them! Reciting the fakir's phrases and using the proper gestures, the rope he held stiffened and stood straight up. Merlin himself climbed the rope and disappeared from view. All the magicians were astounded!

And what had happened to Merlin? He found himself standing in a misty place. He was horrified, as the corpses of the old fakir and his assistant came lumbering toward him.

The fakir said, "I told you how to climb the rope an disappear, but *not* how to get back —nor where the rope leads to *unless* you get back into the world of the living *instantly!* But *now* you *know!* It leads . . . Beyond The Grave!"

The assembled magicians wondered where the scream of terror came from. And where had Merlin vanished to? If they could have looked through the veil into the beyond, they would have seen Merlin standing there, screaming, as four shriveled, corpse-like hands reached for his throat!

THE END D-207



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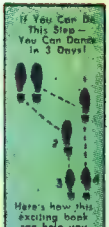

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POOR DOC! HE'S ALL *CUT UP*... BUT HE HAD IT COMING TO HIM! NOW LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GREEDY HANDS CONTROL THE SACRED WAGON OF VISHNU! THIS CREEP HAS A GET-RICH-QUICK SCHEME... BUT, YOU KNOW, THE BEST MADE SCHEMES OF MEN CAN SURE GO WRONG!

JUGGERNAUT

LISTEN TO ME, YOU SONS OF VISHNU! HARKEN TO MY WORDS OF SALVATION! ETERNAL PEACE AND BLESSING BEFALLS ALL WHO SHALL DIE BENEATH THESE SACRED WHEELS AND WHO WILL THEIR BELONGINGS TO VISHNU'S HOLY SHRINE!
N-NO! NOT BENEATH THOSE WHEELS! IT WOULD BE A TORTUROUS DEATH!
AN ADVENTURE INTO TERROR!
GENE COLAN

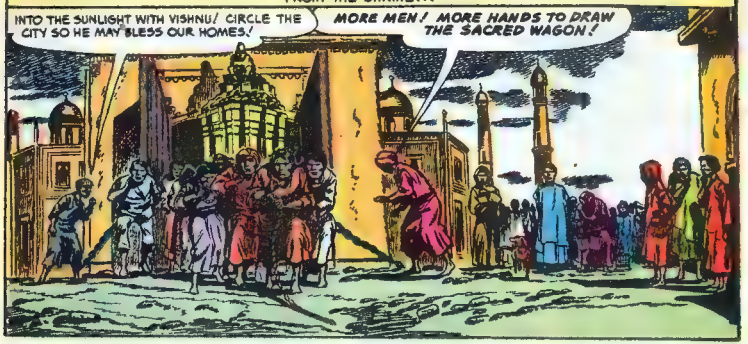
BUT THE FACE OF THE AVARICIOUS FALSE PRIEST SCOWLS AS HE LOOKS AT THE INDIANS OF PURI IN THE YEAR 1606, THE DAY OF THE FEAST OF VISHNU...

FOR A MOMENT'S PAIN WOULD YOU FOREGO ETERNAL SALVATION? OR IS IT A MISER'S SOUL THAT MAKES YOU HESITATE? DO YOU WISH TO DENY THIS SHRINE YOUR TRIFLING POSSESSIONS? THROUGH ME, VISHNU SPEAKS! *OPEN THE GATES! DRAW FORTH HIS MIGHTY WAGON!*

EAGER HANDS TUG ON THE LONG ROPE... SLOWLY THE TOWERING CART WITH THE TERRIFYING STATUE STARTS FROM THE SHRINE...

INTO THE SUNLIGHT WITH VISHNU/ CIRCLE THE CITY SO HE MAY BLESS OUR HOMES!/

MORE MEN! MORE HANDS TO DRAW THE SACRED WAGON!

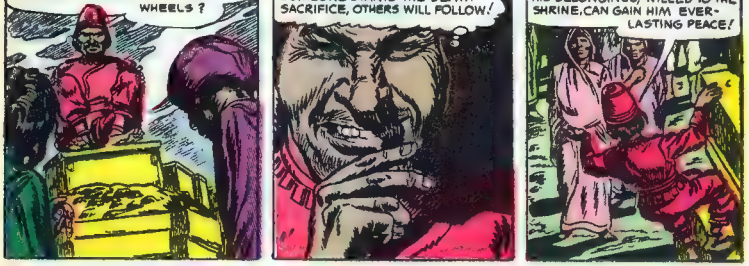


THE WAGON MOVES! THE WHEELS TURN LIKE THE GREAT WHEEL OF THE ENDLESS LIFE CYCLE/ WHO WILL FIND AN END TO HIS EARTH-CYCLE AND A BEGINNING TO ETERNAL LIFE *BENEATH* THE TURNING WHEELS? *SALVATION!* WHO SHALL PURCHASE IT FIRST BY FALLING UNDER THE WHEELS?

BUT NOT A PERSON MOVES IN THE TREMBLING MULTITUDE/ ALL SEEK SALVATION AND ETERNAL BLESSING, BUT THE SIGHT OF THE PONDEROUS WHEELS PARALYZE EVEN THE MOST DEVOUT WITH CHILLING HORROR...

THEY NEED AN *EXAMPLE*...ONCE SOMEONE STARTS THE DEATH SACRIFICE, OTHERS WILL FOLLOW!

I SENSE AMONG YOU HERE A SINNER/ A MAN TREMBLING IN THE NAKEDNESS OF HIS VILE SOUL BEFORE THE PENETRATING GAZE OF VISHNU/ BUT HE IS WRONG TO SUFFER THUS/ THE WHEELS WILL ERASE HIS GUILT/ HIS BELONGINGS, WILLED TO THE SHRINE, CAN GAIN HIM EVER-LASTING PEACE!



AS THE DREAD PRIEST APPROACHES, TERROR CROSSES EACH WORSHIPER'S FACE...

BEHOLD! *THIS MAN* SEEKS SALVATION!...SEE HOW HE *FREELY* THROWS HIMSELF BEFORE THE WHEELS!

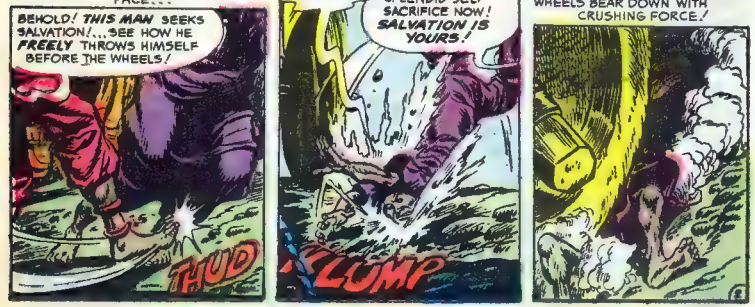
THUD

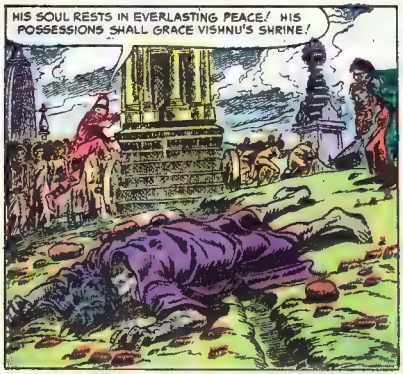
N-NO! NO!

DO NOT SPOIL YOUR SPLENDID SELF-SACRIFICE NOW! *SALVATION IS YOURS!*

CLUMP

AND BEFORE THE FEAR-FROZEN MAN CAN MOVE, THE RELENTLESS WHEELS BEAR DOWN WITH CRUSHING FORCE!



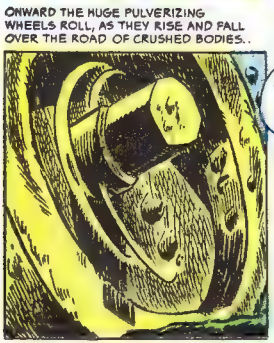

HIS SOUL RESTS IN EVERLASTING PEACE! HIS POSSESSIONS SHALL GRACE VISHNU'S SHRINE!

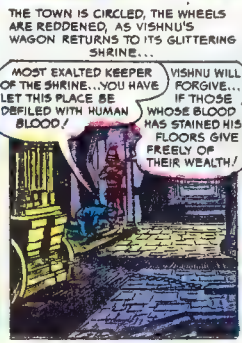
SEE! IT WAS EASY AND QUICK! BUT AN INSTANT AND THEN THE CALM OF ETERNITY! COME! DO NOT DRAW BACK IN FALSE FEAR! FORWARD! FORWARD TO SALVATION!!

AND A WILD HYPNOTIC DEATH-MADNESS SEIZES THE FRENZIED FRONT RANK OF SPECTATORS, AS MEN START FORWARD...

THE SIGHT OF ONE MAN'S SACRIFICE INSPIRES OTHERS...

BEFORE THE MERCILESS WHEELS, THE DUPED BELIEVERS THROW THEMSELVES...

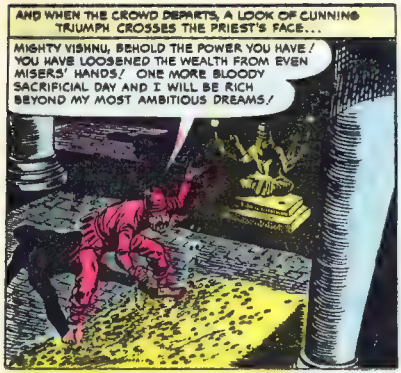

ONWARD THE HUGE PULVERIZING WHEELS ROLL, AS THEY RISE AND FALL OVER THE ROAD OF CRUSHED BODIES..


THE TOWN IS CIRCLED, THE WHEELS ARE REDDENED, AS VISHNU'S WAGON RETURNS TO ITS GLITTERING SHRINE...

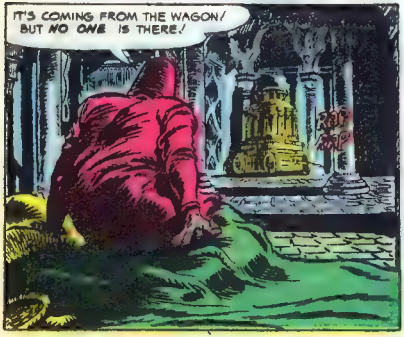
AND SOON THE BEREAVED MOURNERS CARRY IN THE VICTIMS' JEWELS, GOLD, ALL THEIR EARTHLY POSSESSIONS...

MOST EXALTED KEEPER OF THE SHRINE...YOU HAVE LET THIS PLACE BE DEFILED WITH HUMAN BLOOD!
VISHNU WILL FORGIVE... IF THOSE WHOSE BLOOD HAS STAINED HIS FLOORS GIVE FREELY OF THEIR WEALTH!

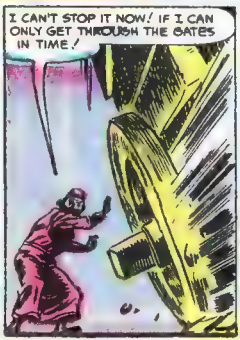
GOLD HERE! JEWELS THERE! AND DO NOT OFFEND THE DEAD BY HOLDING OUT ON VISHNU!
OR ON ME!


AND WHEN THE CROWD DEPARTS, A LOOK OF CUNNING TRIUMPH CROSSES THE PRIEST'S FACE...
MIGHTY VISHNU, BEHOLD THE POWER YOU HAVE! YOU HAVE LOOSENED THE WEALTH FROM EVEN MISERS' HANDS! ONE MORE BLOODY SACRIFICIAL DAY AND I WILL BE RICH BEYOND MY MOST AMBITIOUS DREAMS!

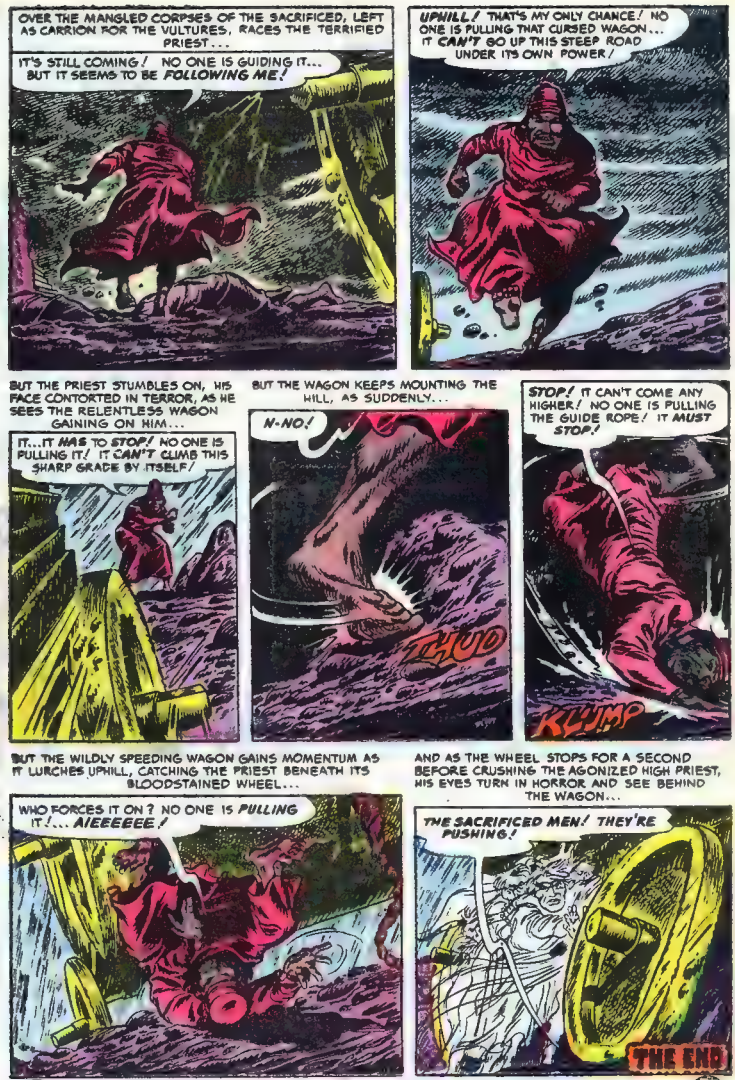
BUT AS THE STORM RAGES, THE SLEEPING PRIEST IS AWAKENED BY THE EERIE, REGULAR AND STEADY POUNDING OF AN UNSEEN HAMMER...



AND AS THE LAST BLOCK FALLS TO THE SIDE, THE GIANT WAGON STARTS TO ROLL DOWN THE GENTLY SLOPING SHRINE FLOOR...



WITH DESPERATE STRIDES, THE PRIEST REACHES THE GATES AND STARTS OUT INTO THE WILD NIGHT AS BEHIND HIM, LOUDER THAN THE OMINOUS THUNDER, RUMBLES THE GREAT WAGON IN SEEMING PURSUIT...


OVER THE MANGLED CORPSES OF THE SACRIFICED, LEFT AS CARRION FOR THE VULTURES, RACES THE TERRIFIED PRIEST...
IT'S STILL COMING! NO ONE IS GUIDING IT... BUT IT SEEMS TO BE FOLLOWING ME!
UPHILL! THAT'S MY ONLY CHANCE! NO ONE IS PULLING THAT CURSED WAGON... IT CAN'T GO UP THIS STEEP ROAD UNDER ITS OWN POWER!
BUT THE PRIEST STUMBLES ON, HIS FACE CONTORTED IN TERROR, AS HE SEES THE RELENTLESS WAGON GAINING ON HIM...
IT...IT HAS TO STOP! NO ONE IS PULLING IT! IT CAN'T CLIMB THIS SHARP GRADE BY ITSELF!
BUT THE WAGON KEEPS MOUNTING THE HILL, AS SUDDENLY...
N-NO!
THUD
STOP! IT CAN'T COME ANY HIGHER! NO ONE IS PULLING THE GUIDE ROPE! IT MUST STOP!
KLUMP
BUT THE WILDLY SPEEDING WAGON GAINS MOMENTUM AS IT LURCHES UPHILL, CATCHING THE PRIEST BENEATH ITS BLOODSTAINED WHEEL...
AND AS THE WHEEL STOPS FOR A SECOND BEFORE CRUSHING THE AGONIZED HIGH PRIEST, HIS EYES TURN IN HORROR AND SEE BEHIND THE WAGON...
WHO FORCES IT ON? NO ONE IS PULLING IT!... AIEEEEEE!
THE SACRIFICED MEN! THEY'RE PUSHING!
THE END

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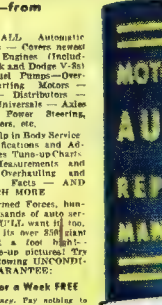

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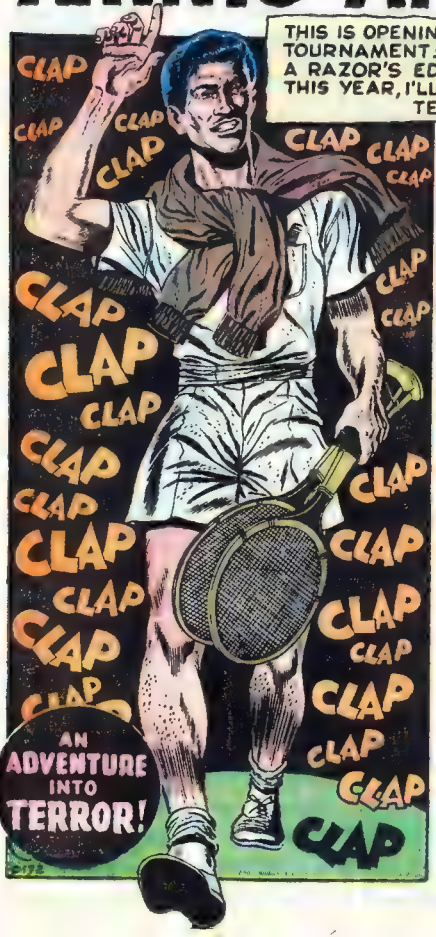
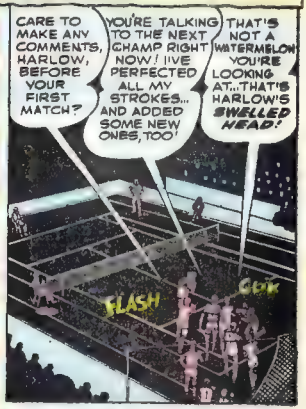
NOW TAKE YOUR SEAT IN THE GRANDSTAND AND WATCH **HARLOW** HIT THAT TENNIS BALL! THE **CHUMP** INTENDS TO BECOME **CHAMP**... AND THIS IS TO BE **HIS** DAY OF TRIUMPH! BUT YOU'D BE SURPRISE HOW QUICKLY CHEERS CAN TURN INTO BOOS, HARLOW!

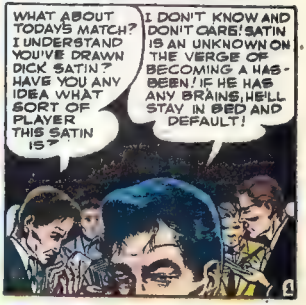
TENNIS ANYONE?



THIS IS OPENING DAY AT THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT! MY GAME IS SHARP AS A RAZOR'S EDGE... AND IF I DON'T WIN THIS YEAR, I'LL EAT A DOZEN CANS OF TENNIS BALLS!


CARE TO MAKE ANY COMMENTS, HARLOW, BEFORE YOUR FIRST MATCH?
YOU'RE TALKING TO THE NEXT CHAMP RIGHT NOW! I'VE PERFECTED ALL MY STROKES... AND ADDED SOME NEW ONES, TOO!
THAT'S NOT A WATERMELON YOU'RE LOOKING AT... THAT'S HARLOW'S SWELLED HEAD!
FLASH
CLICK

I HEAR THE "SWELLED HEAD" CRACK, BUT I IGNORE IT! THAT'S THE SORT OF THING A MAN HAS TO PUT UP WITH WHEN HE *KNOWS* HE'S GOOD!


WHAT ABOUT TODAY'S MATCH? I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE DRAWN DICK SATIN? HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT SORT OF PLAYER THIS SATIN IS?
I DON'T KNOW AND DON'T CARE! SATIN IS AN UNKNOWN ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A HAS-BEEN! IF HE HAS ANY BRAINS, HE'LL STAY IN BED AND DEFAULT!

BUT WHEN IT'S TIME FOR THE MATCH, SATIN SHOWS UP! STRICTLY SMALL-TIME... HE BRINGS ONLY ***ONE RACKET*** WITH HIM... AND WHAT A LAUGH I GET DURING THE WARM-UP SESSION! THIS PUNK'S FORM IS SO BAD, HE COULDN'T QUALIFY AS BALL BOY AT A HOME FOR THE AGED!

THEY'RE WARMING UP ON THE CENTER COURT NOW, FOLKS... HARLOW'S STROKING IS TRULY MAGNIFICENT! HIS OPPONENT, DICK SATIN, AN UNKNOWN, IS TO PUT IT MILDLY, SLIGHTLY AWKWARD...

TIME TO PLAY... I SERVE FIRST! I THROW THE BALL HIGH INTO THE AIR, BRING MY RACKET BACK SMOOTHLY, UNCOIL... AND SMASH A CANNONBALL!

WOW! WHAT A SERVICE!

WHACK

BUT SATIN MANAGES TO GET THAT RACKET OF HIS ON THE BALL AND SENDS BACK A TRICKY SHOT THAT I NEVER REACH DESPITE A DESPERATE LUNGE!

SLAM

THE CROWD LAUGHS AND I GET RILED! I THOUGHT I'D TAKE IT EASY WITH THIS PUNK, EXPERIMENT WITH SOME NEW SHOTS, BUT ***NOW*** I'M GOING TO BLAST HIM OFF THE COURT!

HA HA HA HA

BUT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN THAT WAY! SATIN'S FORM STAYS HORRIBLE, BUT ALL HE HAS TO DO IS TOUCH THE BALL WITH THAT RACKET OF HIS, AND THE SHOTS THAT TRICKLE BACK ARE ALL WINNERS!

CRACK

THIS MUST BE A NIGHTMARE! I TRY EVERY DIRTY TRICK I KNOW! I TRY TO DISTRACT HIM WHILE HE'S WAITING FOR LOBS! I RUSH MY SERVICE, BUT THE PONTS KEEP PILING UP RELENTLESSLY AGAINST ME! AND FINALLY...

GAME, SET, MATCH... MR. SATIN! ***MR. SATIN WINS!***

WHEN SATIN APPROACHES THE NET, I IGNORE HIS OUTSTRETCHED HAND!

SO I STALK OFF TOWARDS THE CLUBHOUSE, MY BLOOD BOILING!

LET ME SEE THAT RACKET! THERE'S SOMETHING PHONY GOING ON HERE!

NO! YOU MUSTN'T TOUCH IT!

MR. HARLOW, PLEASE.... RESTRAIN YOURSELF!

CARE TO MAKE ANY STATEMENTS AFTER YOUR FIRST MATCH, HARLOW?

GO TO THE DEVIL!

YOU ALWAYS WERE A POOR SPORT, HARLOW! YOU'VE HAD THIS COMING FOR A LONG TIME!

BOO BOO BOO BOO BOO

IN THE CLUBHOUSE, SATIN DRESSES SILENTLY BESIDE ME AFTER STOWING THAT RACKET OF HIS AWAY IN THE LOCKER!

I STILL THINK SOMETHING'S PHONY! IT JUST DOESN'T FIGURE THAT A GUY WITH SUCH ROTTEN FORM SHOULD BEAT A PLAYER LIKE ME! TONIGHT... WHEN NO ONE'S AROUND... I'LL COME BACK HERE AND CHECK HIS RACKET!

SO THAT NIGHT, I STEAL BACK INTO THE SHADOWY LOCKER ROOM! I USE A SKELETON KEY TO OPEN SATIN'S LOCKER! AND I'M JUST ABOUT TO LAY MY HANDS UPON IT...

WHEN SUDDENLY I'M GRABBED FROM BEHIND!

AAAARRRGH!

I'M COMING TO NOW, THE SICKLY SWEET SMELL OF CHLOROFORM STILL CLOGGING MY NOSTRILS...

WHERE AM I?

YOU WOULD GIVE ANYTHING IN THE WORLD TO PLAY CHAMPIONSHIP TENNIS ... WOULDN'T YOU, HARLOW?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME?

I AM GOING TO GRANT YOU YOUR WISH, BURGESS HARLOW!

BUT *HOW?* W-WHY ARE YOU GOING TO CUT ME OPEN?

TO MAKE SURE AT LEAST *PART OF YOU* PLAYS CHAMPIONSHIP TENNIS! I NEED ANOTHER RACKET, HARLOW... MY RACKET... AS YOU GUESSED... IS A VERY SPECIAL KIND! *THE STRINGS...*

... ARE *NOT* MADE OF *CATGUT!!*

AIEEEEEEEE!

THE END

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READY FOR THE BIG WINDUP, KIDDIES? THERE ARE A LOT OF GUYS IN THIS WORLD NAMED JOE... BUT WE GUARANTEE YOU... NO "JOE" EVER HAD THE SHOCKING EXPERIENCE THIS "JOE" DID! AMAZING WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO A GUY WHEN HE FINDS HE'S ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD!

THE LAST MAN!

JOE'S EYES GLOW IN THE DARK! HIS LIPS, HIS BODY QUIVER WITH THE *NEED TO KILL!* HE IS CONSUMED WITH HIS NEED... HIS EVERY THOUGHT, HIS EVERY FEELING FOCUSED ON THIS ONE DESIRE ...TO KILL THE MAN COMING TOWARD HIM...

HE'S COMIN'! I WANT TO *KILL* HIM SO BAD IT'S LIKE A TASTE IN MY MOUTH! MORE THAN ANYTHIN' I'VE EVER WANTED IN MY WHOLE LIFE, I WANT TO SEE HIM DEAD AT MY FEET!

AN ADVENTURE INTO TERROR!

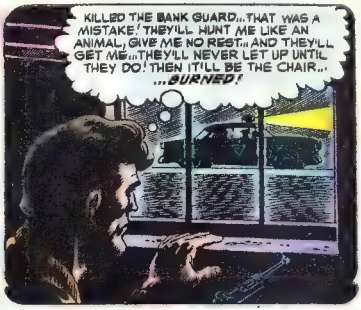
THE STEPS COME CLOSER! QUICK PICTURES SIFT THROUGH THE MIND OF THE KILLER...PICTURES OF EVENTS OF THE LAST 12 HOURS THAT HAD LED TO THIS...

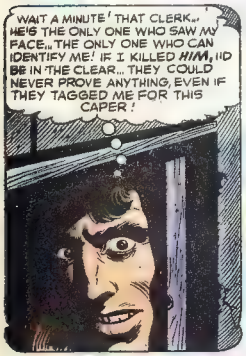
HE REMEMBERED HOW THE HANDKERCHIEF HAD SLIPPED FROM HIS FACE AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE HOW THE CLERK HAD LOOKED AND SEEN HIS FACE PLAINLY...

BUT BEFORE HE COULD KILL THE CLERK THE SOUND BEHIND HIM HAD SPUN HIM AROUND...

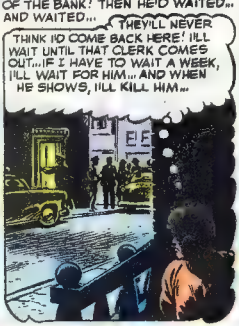
HE HAD RUN THEN, KILLING A BANK GUARD AS HE LEFT...

HE'D DITCHED THE CAR HE'D USED AND HID IN THE CELLAR OF A DESERTED HOUSE! HE COULD HEAR THE DISTANT POLICE SIRENS AS THE MEN OF THE LAW COMBED THE CITY...

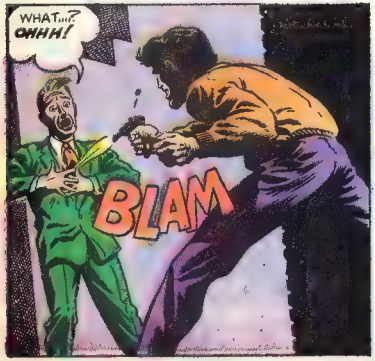

KILLED THE BANK GUARD... THAT WAS A MISTAKE! THEY'LL HUNT ME LIKE AN ANIMAL, GIVE ME NO REST... AND THEY'LL GET ME... THEY'LL NEVER LET UP UNTIL THEY DO! THEN IT'LL BE THE CHAIR...
...BURNED!


WAIT A MINUTE! THAT CLERK... HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO SAW MY FACE... THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN IDENTIFY ME! IF I KILLED HIM, I'D BE IN THE CLEAR... THEY COULD NEVER PROVE ANYTHING, EVEN IF THEY TAGGED ME FOR THIS CAPER!

BY BACK STREETS AND ALLEYS HE'D COME AGAIN TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE BANK! THEN HE'D WAITED... AND WAITED...


THEY'LL NEVER THINK I'D COME BACK HERE! I'LL WAIT UNTIL THAT CLERK COMES OUT... IF I HAVE TO WAIT A WEEK, I'LL WAIT FOR HIM... AND WHEN HE SHOWS, I'LL KILL HIM...

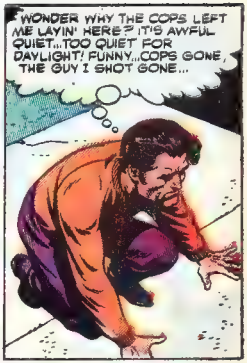
HOURS PASSED AND WITH THEIR PASSING THE HATE AND THE DESIRE TO KILL ONE MAN HAD GROWN, UNTIL NOW THAT THE TIME HAS COME, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT IN THE WORLD FOR JOE BUT THIS ONE PASSION...

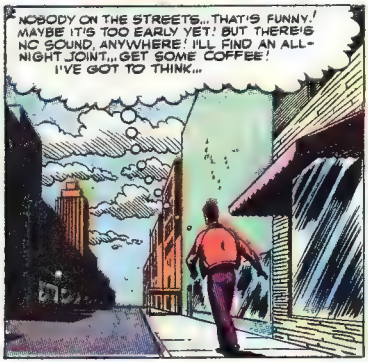


THE MAN CRUMPLES BEFORE HIM! A SHOUT SOUNDS! HE TURNS... TOO LATE!

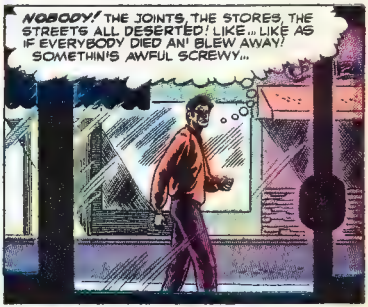
HE FALLS THROUGH A BOTTOMLESS HOLE OF STAR-SHOT PAIN! SOMEWHERE A CLOCK CHIMES SEVEN, THEN...OBLIVION!

SUN SHINES...THE WARMTH IS ON HIS FACE! HE OPENS HIS EYES, BLINKING IN THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING...




NOBODY ON THE STREETS...THAT'S FUNNY! MAYBE IT'S TOO EARLY YET! BUT THERE'S NO SOUND, ANYWHERE! I'LL FIND AN ALL-NIGHT JOINT...GET SOME COFFEE! I'VE GOT TO THINK...

HE WALKS DOWN THE DESERTED STREETS...NO SOUND, NO MOVEMENT OTHER THAN HIS OWN! AN EERIE EMPTINESS SILENTLY ECHOES THROUGH THE VAST CITY...


NOBODY! THE JOINTS, THE STORES, THE STREETS ALL DESERTED! LIKE...LIKE AS IF EVERYBODY DIED AN' BLEW AWAY! SOMETHIN'S AWFUL SCREWY...

HE'S A MAN WHO LIKES COMPANY, JOE IS...HE'S ALWAYS HAD A HORROR OF BEING ALONE! HE'S FRIGHTENED NOW...FRIGHTENED BY THE ALONENESS, EMPTINESS...

HE RUNS FASTER, SHOUTS LOUDER! HE RIPS OPEN DOORS, RUNS THROUGH BUILDINGS...

THE CITY'S EMPTY... NO ONE, NO SIGN OF A LIVING BEING! JOE'S HALF CRAZY NOW, A NAMELESS FEAR PRESSING AT HIM...

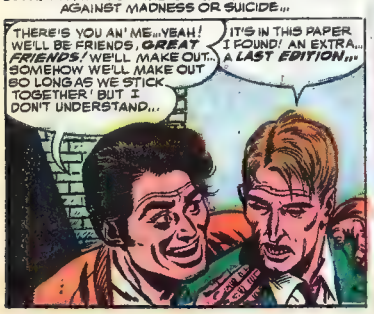
ONLY ECHOES ANSWER! HE SINKS TO THE CURB, TERRIBLY ALONE, SOBBING IN BEWILDERMENT AND FEAR...

HE JUMPS UP! A FIGURE WEAVES TOWARD HIM! A GREAT CRY OF JOY RIPS FROM JOE'S LIPS! HE RUNS TOWARD THE FIGURE...

HE STOPS SUDDENLY IN FRONT OF THE MAN! IT'S HIM... THE CLERK HE SHOT LAST NIGHT.. F IT WAS LAST NIGHT.

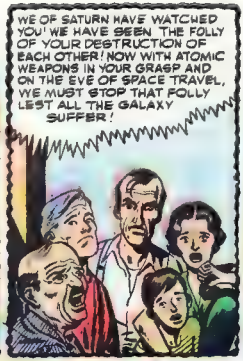
YOU!
YOU SHOT ME! I CAME TO THIS MORNING...SAW YOU LYING THERE, THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD! I WANDERED AWAY. THE WHOLE CITY... IT'S EMPTY...THE COUNTRY, THE EARTH...EMPTY...NOBODY LEFT, JUST YOU...AND ME...

JOE LAUGHS! HE GRABS THE MAN HE'D WANTED SO MUCH TO KILL...HE HUGS HIM!" NOBODY LEFT, JUST YOU AND ME!" NOBODY BUT THIS MAN... A LIVING BULWARK AGAINST THE SILENCE, THE EMPTINESS... AGAINST MADNESS OR SUICIDE...


THERE'S YOU AN' ME...YEAH! WE'LL BE FRIENDS, GREAT FRIENDS! WE'LL MAKE OUT. SOMEHOW WE'LL MAKE OUT SO LONG AS WE STICK TOGETHER! BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I'LL IN THIS PAPER. I FOUND! AN EXTRA... A LAST EDITION...

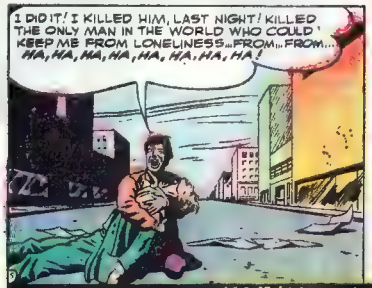
JOE TAKES THE PAPER! IT'S ALL THERE! IT STARTED LAST NIGHT AT ONE MINUTE AFTER SEVEN...

HE READS THE VIVID, FRIGHTENED WORDS, AND IN HIS MIND HE SEES IT...HEARS THE TERRIBLE, METALLIC VOICE THAT CAME FROM THE SAUCERS...

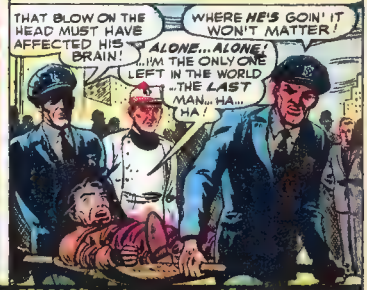

WE OF SATURN HAVE WATCHED YOU! WE HAVE SEEN THE FOLLY OF YOUR DESTRUCTION OF EACH OTHER! NOW WITH ATOMIC WEAPONS IN YOUR GRASP AND ON THE EVE OF SPACE TRAVEL, WE MUST STOP THAT FOLLY LEST ALL THE GALAXY SUFFER!

IN A MOMENT WE SHALL RELEASE A GAS WHICH WILL BRING YOU COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL! YOU WILL THEN BE PUT ABOARD OUR SHIPS AND TRANSFERRED TO MARS AND SATURN WHERE YOU WILL BECOME SLAVES! EARTH WILL BE LEFT UNINHABITED UNTIL IN SOME DISTANT FUTURE A NEW RACE EVOLVES FROM ITS RUINS...

THE LAST MAN IN THE WORLD SITS IN AN EMPTY CITY HOLDING A CORPSE IN HIS ARMS! HIS LIPS TWIST, MANIACAL LAUGHTER ECHOES THROUGH THE LIFELESS CANYONS OF THE DEAD CITY...


I DID IT! I KILLED HIM, LAST NIGHT! I KILLED THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD WHO COULD KEEP ME FROM LONELINESS...FROM...FROM... HA,HA,HA,HA,HA,HA,HA,HA,HA!

FUNNY HOW THE TWISTED BRAIN OF A DELIRIOUS KILLER CAN INVENT A NIGHTMARE WHICH WILL TORTURE HIM FOR THE REST OF HIS NATURAL LIFE!


THAT BLOW ON THE HEAD MUST HAVE AFFECTED HIS BRAIN!
WHERE HE'S GOIN' IT WON'T MATTER!
ALONE... ALONE! ...I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT IN THE WORLD ...THE LAST MAN... HA... HA!

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE OF "ADVENTURES INTO TERROR" YOU'LL SEE WHY "THE CORPSES CAME BACK"...AND THERE'LL BE A GREAT MIXTURE OF OTHER GRUESOME TALES! DON'T MISS 'EM!

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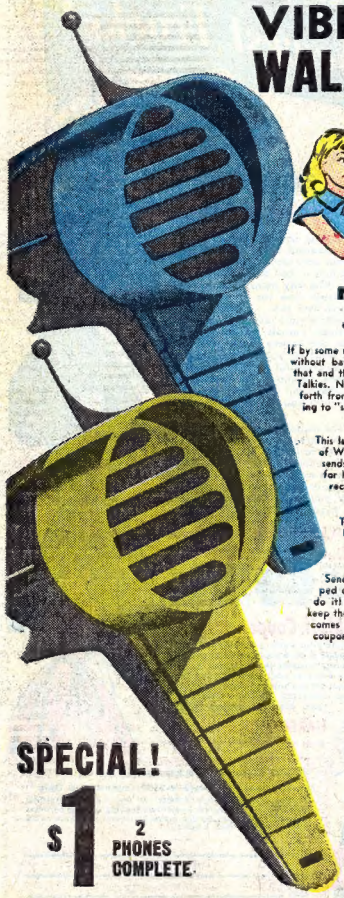

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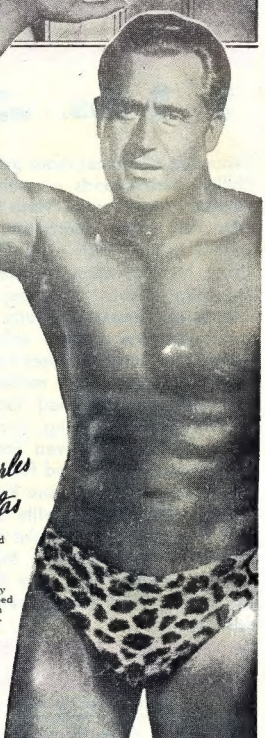

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